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072104Z Nov 03

C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 007020

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [ETRD](#) [ETTC](#) [TU](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: HABUR GATE/IBRAHIM KAHILIL

REF: DTG 072104Z NOV 03

(U) Classified by Ambassador Eric S. Edelman. Reasons: 1.5
(b) and (d).

1. (C) In reftel CPA reacts to proposals for discussions with Turkey on transit capacity on the Iraqi border. The message rejects the Turkish proposal for a second gate because it is "politically" motivated. As we view the issue, the U.S. has a significant interest in improving the flow of goods across the Turkish border into Iraq because: we are using it to supply ourselves, we are using it to supply necessary humanitarian supplies, and we want trade with Iraq to grow as a contribution to normality. Furthermore there is a prospect that we will want to use a line of communication through Turkey to rotate troops and equipment, that would put additional strain on this border crossing.

2. (C) It is clear to us that the only way to address this continuing bottleneck is by engaging with the GOT in Ankara, including but not uniquely on their preferred solution. A joint effort among Turkey, Iraq and CPA/U.S. parties could elaborate other solutions that would be more expeditious or effective in the near term avoiding a misguided Turkish political approach to the problem. However, engagement needs to include the Turkish approach. Furthermore if we don't push the Iraqi Ministries to engage and participate aggressively ourselves, we can be sure that this problem will only fester and limit our options and Iraq's future relations with its northern neighbors.

3. (C) We therefore reiterate our recommendation that a CPA/CJTF-7/Iraqi Ministry group engage with Ankara on operations on the Iraq/Turkish border. We understand the Iraqi Foreign and Interior Minister will accompany IGC President Talibani to Turkey on November 19 and suggest that is an appropriate target to opportunity to initiate a policy review of this problem by all relevant actors.

4. (U) Baghdad minize considered.
EDELMAN